



State of Illinois

Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities

celebrates

## NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH



"Inclusion Drives Innovation"

**OCTOBER 26, 2017**

**JAMES R. THOMPSON CENTER  
CHICAGO**

## Proclamation



*WHEREAS*, workplaces welcoming of the talents of all people, including people with disabilities, are a critical part of our efforts to build an inclusive community and strong economy; and,

*WHEREAS*, National Disability Employment Awareness Month aims to raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of people with disabilities; and,

*WHEREAS*, this year's theme, "Inclusion Drives Innovation," is accordant with the State of Illinois' dedication to improving the lives of all Illinoisans by employing skilled individuals of all ability levels; and,

*WHEREAS*, activities during this month will reinforce the value and talent that people with disabilities add to our workplaces and communities, and affirm Illinois' commitment to an inclusive community;

*THEREFORE*, I, Bruce Rauner, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim October 2017 as **NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH** in Illinois, and encourage all employers, schools, and other community organizations in Illinois to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities, and to advance the important message that people with disabilities are equal to the task throughout the year.

*In Witness Whereof*, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.



*Debbie White*

SECRETARY OF STATE

*Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield,*  
this NINETEENTH day of OCTOBER, in  
the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and  
SEVENTEEN, and of the State of Illinois,  
one hundred and NINETY-NINTH.

*Bruce Rauner*

GOVERNOR

## Program

### Opening Performance

Sutikshna Veeravalli

Bharatanatyam - Classical Indian Dance Performance

### Welcome

Horacio Esparza, Executive Director

Progress Center for Independent Living

### Greetings

H. Alex Bautista, Deputy Director

Illinois Department of Human Rights

James T. Dimas, Secretary

Illinois Department of Human Services

### Keynote and State of Illinois Proclamation

Illinois Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti

### 2017 ICED Awards

Outstanding Employee of the Year Award

John Eckert, Illinois Department of Aging

Advocate of the Year Award

Legal Advocacy Services Team

Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission

### Closing Performance

Charles "Chuck- A- Luck" Crane, Guitarist and Vocalist

## Performers



### Opening - Sutikshna Veeravalli

Ms. Veeravalli is a Bharatanatyam dancer with a dynamic presence and excellent technique. Since the age of four and a half, Sutikshna has trained in Bharatanatyam - one of the oldest classical dance forms of India that originates from the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. She is also trained in the fine art of vocal Carnatic music. Sutikshna has performed at various venues across the United States and in India. Although Sutikshna was born with congenital anomalies, (she was born without a palm and wears a prosthesis on her right foot), her precise and emotive movements have won her multiple awards and honorable mentions, including the Illinois Arts Council Master Apprentice Award. It is easy to witness the passion that Sutikshna holds for dance and music. In addition to her artistic talents, Sutikshna holds undergraduate degrees in English and Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Photo by: R. Vetri, TheHindu.Com, Feb 17, 2013



### Closing - Charles Crane

Charles "Chuck- A- Luck" Crane has been an active member of Chicago's music scene for over forty years as a lead and rhythm guitarist and vocalist. Raised in Chicago, Blues Capital of the World, Crane has spent much of his career performing at classic blues venues such as Kingston Mines, Buddy Guys', Chicago B.L.U.E.S. Bar, and many more. Over his long career, he has had the pleasure of performing on stage with legends such as Muddy Waters, Howling Wolf, Sonny Boy Williams III, Keith Richards of Rollin' Stone and has played in front of international crowds in places like Poland, Italy, and Paris amongst others. Despite some physical challenges, Crane continues to perform at venues such as Linda's Place and Smitty's Lounge on the Southside of Chicago and in Harvey, Illinois. More information is available by contacting M.A.G.I.C. Productions at Reid-magic50llc@yahoo.com, or (773)914-0444 or (312) 694-3629.

## Awardees



### Outstanding Employee of the Year

John Eckert is Senior Policy Advisor at the Illinois Department of Aging. John's primary focus is on rebalancing the long term care system to ensure that individuals with disabilities and the elderly have every opportunity to live independently. John has served as the agency's lead for State programs such as Money Follows the Program,

Inter-agency LTSS Rebalancing Workgroup, Older Americans Services Advisory Committee and more. He has also co-led the agency on efforts related to federal programs. John is a true advocate for individuals with disabilities and the elderly helping them to transition from nursing facilities back to the community assisting them with accessing needed housing, supplies and services. We congratulate him on his outstanding commitment to excellence.



### Advocate of the Year Award

The Legal Advocacy Services Team at the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission has litigated and advocated on behalf of

numerous citizens with physical and mental disabilities. The Legal Advocacy Service program assists persons with disabilities in mental health facilities, residential programs, community placements, and nursing homes. The LAS Team of attorneys tackle issues including, but not limited to: admission and discharge from hospitalization, adequate treatment, refusal of unwanted services, and confidentiality of mental health records. In this past year alone, there have been eight mental health cases that have been decided and one is currently pending review by the Supreme Court. This small but dedicated team has worked to ensure that their rights guaranteed by Illinois' mental health laws are protected. We congratulate the Legal Advocacy Services Team on their commitment to improving conditions for persons with disabilities all across the State of Illinois.

## Master of Ceremonies



### Horacio Esparza

Mr. Horacio Esparza serves as Executive Director of Progress Center for Independent Living since 2008. Prior to that, he served at Progress Center in other capacities beginning in 1999. Horacio is known for producing and hosting the first radio show in the country dedicated to disability rights, culture, and the independent living philosophy.

"Radio Vida Independiente" ("Independent Living") broadcasts live on air and on the internet. Due to his wide reach and experience, Horacio travels at the local, national and international level speaking on topics related to persons with disabilities. He was born in Zacatecas, México and studied at the school for the blind in the City of Guadalajara, Jalisco. He went on to earn his Bachelor's degree in Hispanic-American Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He also received a degree in philosophy from the Autonomous University of Guadalajara, Jalisco. He is a recipient of the 2006 William F. Lynch Award from the Guild for the Blind and continues to be an active member of several disability rights organizations.



### Did you know?

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) dates back to 1945, when Congress declared the first week in October "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." The return of service members with disabilities from World War II sparked public interest in the contributions of people with disabilities in the workplace. On August 11, 1945, President Harry S. Truman approved a Congressional resolution declaring the first week in October "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week. In 1962, the word "physically" is removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. It wasn't until 1988 when the United States Congress officially declared October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. For more information on NDEAM, visit the following websites:

Library of Congress: [www.loc.gov/disability-employment-awareness-month/](http://www.loc.gov/disability-employment-awareness-month/)  
US Department of Labor: [www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/](http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/)

## Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the following:

The Office of Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner  
The Office of Illinois Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti  
The Illinois Department of Human Rights  
The Illinois Department of Human Services  
The Illinois Attorney General Civil Rights Bureau  
Illinois Office of Information Services  
Illinois Central Management Services, Bureau of Property Management  
Mai Lee  
Rozina Gilani-Salim  
Sutikshna Veeravalli  
Charles "Chuck-A-Luck" Crane

Thank you to the following ICED Job and Resource Fair Exhibitors:

Central Management Services, Business Enterprise Program  
Central Management Services, Diversity Enrichment Program  
Illinois Department of Agriculture  
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services  
Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Recruitment/Selection  
Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Accessibility/Job Accommodation  
Illinois Department of Human Rights  
Illinois Department of Public Health  
Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs  
Office of Illinois Treasurer  
AbilityLinks  
El Valor  
Great Lakes ADA  
Search Inc.

## ICED

**The Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED)** was created by statute in 1974 to support State of Illinois employees with disabilities and State of Illinois agencies in regards to disability-related issues of concern. ICED's mission is to promote access, independence, and opportunity for State employees with disabilities. By statute, ICED promotes affirmative action efforts in state agencies to employ people with disabilities and to recommend, where appropriate, means of strengthening such programs.

Members:

- Illinois Department of Human Rights
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Illinois Lieutenant Governor
- Illinois Attorney General
- Illinois Secretary of State
- Illinois State Comptroller
- Illinois State Treasurer
- Illinois Department of Central Management Services
- Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs
- Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Illinois Civil Service Commission
- Illinois State Employees with Disabilities appointed by the Governor

**Join ICED!** An individual who wishes to serve as one of the Statutory members of the Committee appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Governor must be a State employee with a disability. **[www.iced.illinois.gov](http://www.iced.illinois.gov)**



Coming Soon!

Planning is underway for the Illinois Bicentennial, an event that will celebrate all that is great in Illinois: our history, our people, and our communities. To commemorate our state's 200th birthday, a year-long celebration will take place between December 3, 2017 through December 3, 2018. There are three pillars of Illinois Bicentennial: *CELEBRATE, INSPIRE, INVEST*. More info at <https://illinois200.com>